



Joint Meeting ~ Arkansas River Committees

Meeting Highlights from February 16, 2005

Place: WATER Center, 101 E. Pawnee

Next Advisory Meeting Scheduled: **March 22, 2006**

Place: 8th Floor, City Hall 455 N. Main, South Conference Room

In attendance:

Kay Johnson, Dept of Environmental Services
Becky Gagnon, Water & Sewer
Charles Cope, KDWP
Deb Baker, KWO
Charles Anderson, Dept of Environmental Services
Libby Albers, Dept of Environmental Services
Don Henry, Dept. of Environmental Services
Scott Wadle, MAPD
Nancy Larson, KSU-PPI
Yvonne Cather, Sierra Club
Vaughn Weaver, Water & Sewer
Doris Leslie, Dept. of Environmental Services
Tonya Bronlewee, EARTH
Bob Martz, City Council
Tom Kneil, Arkansas River Coalition
Christy Askew, MAPD

Jim Hardesty, Dept. of Environmental Services
M.S. Mitchell
Rich Basore, KDHE
M. Jones, KDHE
Irene Hart, Sedgwick County
Betty Pitts, Riverside Citizen
Kathy Dittmer, Riverside Citizen's Association
Claire Willenburg
Jack Brown, KU School of Medicine
Ben Rogers, Wichita Audubon Society
Chris Stewart, Water & Sewer
Ellie Skokan, guest
Joe Botinelly, Water & Sewer
Steve Dalluge, Raytheon Aircraft
Sharon Fearey, City Council
Kay Drennen, Dept of Environmental Services
Chris Collins, Wichita Paddlers

2005 Review

1. **Committee Updates:** Kay Johnson, Director of Environmental Services
 - WRAPS-working together with Sedgwick County and waiting for a response from KDHE. Grant may include a part-time person to help with stakeholder actions
 - Submitted a request for federal appropriation to look at dredging and silt removal – council did not vote this action into their “top 10” but it has still generated interest
 - New fish consumption advisory generated misleading press report
 - Both committees have been regular through 2005
 - Channel 7 is going to be airing a special – the DVD is available at the library
2. **Stormwater Audit:** Jim Hardesty, Stormwater Specialist
 - Permit is administered by KDHE/EPA
 - Monitors point and non-point sources
 - Numerous key elements as part of NPDES – flood control, street sweeping, cross contamination, construction sites, wet weather sampling, industrial monitoring
 - Industrial inspections have three categories: SARA/high risk, Commercial applicators of pesticides and herbicides, and general commercial
 - Review of an inspection – good efforts, viewed during audit, Surface water and groundwater efforts.
 - Partners with Mark Hall to do all the construction and residential inspections.
 - There are some online sources for P2 plans however, they do need to be signed off by a PE
3. **Lift Stations and Cross Connections:** Joe Botinelly, Sewer Maintenance Superintendent
 - Channel crossing program – 202 locations – external inspections, prioritize conditions into 3-mos, 6-mos, or 1 year frequency
 - Cross connections – stormwater and sanitary sewer have been separated for decades. Smoke test, televise and rehabilitate portions of the sewer each year.
 - 15th Street: still in the works
 - North Area Sewer Project – big project on the horizon – part is currently unsewered, part is still undeveloped.
4. **Pretreatment Efforts:** Becky Gagnon, Pretreatment Administrator & Vaughn Weaver, Environmental Specialist
 - Pretreatment – partnership with the local community. Lowering contaminants and heavy metals coming to the sewer treatment plant

- River Bio-Monitoring program 2005 – 10 sites. Run with volunteer help and Hutton student = 58 days of donated labor. Look at both fish and bugs.
 - Fish: 36 species (10 sites), 2 endangered: peppered chub, silver chub
 - Bugs: don't migrate, dedicated to their location (7 sites)
 - Chemical: multiple times each month
- Big Ark – public waters, Little Ark – private and need landowner permission to get on and sample
- Pretreatment – limits the amount of industrial chemicals and grease that enter the Sewer Plant. “Ultra Clean” samples are taken, Mercury is measured down to the nanogram level, and industries remove grease and oil to reduce line blockages and loading on the treatment plant.
- Overall:
 - The Arkansas River is rated as Fair,
 - Several sites ranked Good (downstream of Wichita),
 - Tributaries are ranked Poor (based on fish and water quality),
 - Many problems are due to the lack of habitat – sandy streams does not hold habitat well,
 - Seen a steady increase in water quality,
 - Persistence by city departments - need ability to sustain the work that we are doing
- 5. Private Wastewater Systems:** Don Henry, Water Quality Program Supervisor
 - Wastewater on-site: gray water and black water
 - Goals: treat and dispose of wastewater properly, if mal-functioning, septic systems and lagoons could damage the environment and pose a risk to public health
 - Big picture: contracted KU through an EPA LEPP grant. Coordinated with SgCo on the ranking of sites. Over 4000 properties identified by address as not being connected to public sewer.
- 6. Clean-Ups and Education:** Libby Albers, Environmental Specialist
 - Presentations to classrooms and at Earth day with a focus on the Arkansas River and water quality
 - Two clean-ups performed in conjunction with other groups. Over a ton of trash collected at each event
- 7. Arkansas River Coalition Report:** Tom Kneil, Arkansas River Coalition
 - Existed 9 years as a groups with goals to form local groups along the length of the Arkansas River, monitor water quality and promote natural areas and the use of the river
 - Has had limited success gathering other groups along the 1400-miles of the river
 - 100 individual members, 5 groups across multiple states
 - Most individual members are local
 - Newsletter is published six times a year
 - Lead/organize mini floats – 8-10 people but after media blitz last year, the group received 30 inquiries and 19 participants at the next event
 - River Guardians – boimonitoring classes to train folks to assess the health of the river. Teams go out 4 times a year – data is made available to KDHE
 - Attend meetings and hearings on water issues
 - Raising funds for the KDWP access plan and for a display at Exploration Place
 - Monitor the USACE permits and submit comments
 - Maintain a webpage
 - Hold clean-ups and participate in city-organized clean-ups
 - Received a grant from the Wichita Community Foundation to revitalize the group's brochure and to develop a “Discovery Box” for use by schools that will focus specifically on the Arkansas River
- 8. Sierra Club Report:** Yvonne Cather, Sierra Club
 - Offer many opportunities for boating on the Arkansas River – Main goal is to get folks out on the river
 - Coordinate with city on river clean-up and float. Plan to do literature drops in 2006
 - Education – local presentations
 - Each month they offer a moonlight trip with the goal being to go from Wichita to the Kaw lake area
 - KS Sierra Club has a paid lobbyist that monitors things that go on on the river: landfills, navigable stream issues, etc.
 - On several speaker's bureaus
 - February 20th – meeting to develop a “Water Campaign” and a traveling display
- 9. Wichita Paddlers Report:** Chris Collins, Wichita Paddlers
 - Wichita Paddlers organization is a promoter of paddling and safety training, and attempts to reach the many thousands of boaters who have never been acquainted with a paddling club or exposed to safety training.

- The Paddlers host a monthly meeting on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at the WATER Center
- Chris presented slides demonstrating flat-water activities on the Arkansas River including shots taken at the new Garvey Park Access, slides demonstrating whitewater activities at the spillway, and a short presentation showing some “ideas we might steal from Colorado”. For this part, Chris showed slides of FIBARK that included lots of people, vendors and boaters. He showed details of two holes in Salida, details of the Salida dam with fish ladder/canoe shoot and details of the Buena Vista play hole. This also included a close up of a sign describing the benefits to both fishermen and kayakers.

2006 Planning Session

1. **Arkansas River Access Plan:** Ken McCloskey, KDWP

- Arkansas River is one of only three navigable rivers in Kansas. It has thousands of acres that currently cannot be accessed.
- Rice County to Oklahoma = 150 miles of river
- **Current access:** five points in Rice County, none in Hutchinson, one in Oxford, one in Wichita at Garvey Park, and one at the South Arkansas Greenway (near Derby). For a description of the South Ark Greenway: <http://wichita.gov/CityOffices/Park/Parks.htm?ID=79>
- The proposal calls for an access point every five miles beginning in Rice County and ending near the Oklahoma border. **First phase would be from South Hutchinson to Oxford.** The access points would have special names that are evocative of points of interest or the uniqueness of the location. Safety information would also be displayed at the access points. A flume or chute could be used to bypass the Lincoln Street dam. A good example of a flume: http://www.denvergov.org/South_Platte_River/template21141.asp
- Current sponsorship for Access Study:
 - City of Wichita - \$30k
 - KDWP - \$30k
 - City of Oxford - \$500
 - Sedgwick County - \$10k
 - Sumner County - \$500
 - Reno County - \$5k
 - City of Hutchinson - \$2,500
 - City of South Hutchinson - \$500
- Objectives:
 - Public meetings – get people on board and get ownership in their river – something will happen
 - Mechanism for information flow up and down the river
 - Help resolve land owner conflicts
 - Help resolve river user conflicts
 - Illuminate the obstacles that we are going to have to overcome
- Functional Items:
 - Realistic timeline
 - Detailed landownership – where we can access
 - Types of sites that we need
 - Engineering on sites – lots of work done on types of sites that prevent erosion and are low maintenance
 - Maintenance estimates
 - Future funding sources

2. **What Makes A Good Watershed?:** Debra Baker, KWO

- New set of funding sources because of TMDL's, habitat, flooding, and greenspace issues
- State level work groups – look at past and see how the river can be restored
- Look at all the existing resources and see what happens when they are combined: resources, stresses, declines in function, identified attributes
- BMP's should mimic the original function of the historic watershed

Work Session Summaries:

Brain Storming Session

1. **What would make YOU believe that our river is clean?**

- a. Short Term:

- See through it, visual clarity and flow
- People using it, increased recreational use – more people on the river, saw people on and around the river doing something
- Swimming hole,
- Get rid of dams so river flows and cleans itself
- Positive media reports
- No trash, removal or bulky trash (shopping carts, pipes)
- b. Long Term:
 - Diverse biological community
 - Promote displays on the river
 - Adoption of parts of the river by sponsors or parties
 - Continue trends showing improvement
 - Accurate media interpretation of river water quality

2. What can our COMMITTEES do to improve the public perception of our watershed?

- a. Short Term:
 - Let the community show or experience the beauty of the river (canoe trips, etc) outside the city (like Channel 7)
 - Identify water bodies, displays demonstrating improvements
 - Invite a reporter to DO some of the work and SEE the stuff that is being done. Ask MAPC to allow a presentation on watershed protection
 - Communicate river positives during river fest/ promote river activities
- b. Long Term:
 - Get rid of dams or open dams during high flows. Perception change that a natural Kansas stream is just as pretty as a mountain stream
 - Dedicated funding source
 - More aggressive public education i.e. required school classes, developers, politicians, and planners MUST be certified to develop environmentally sustainable practices
 - Encourage businesses (WaterWalk) for participatory activities – restaurants, docks, access points/develop whitewater activities

What's the Score: Prioritizing the remaining Symposium 2000 suggestions

Category: Education

29 Responses

- 17% Provide factual information to the community at large about both corrective and preventive actions they can take as individuals, groups, government, industry, etc. which sustain the river in a "clean" condition under all ranges of flow
- 17% Develop community-wide River Festival event on improving water quality -- Incorporate environmental ethics into River Festival, i.e., waste reduction and conservation related events, river history including pre-city biology
- 14% Identify potential non-point sources of pollution that come from the general public and develop media awareness / education campaign for public -- Public education to address: littering, lawn chemical applications -- Public education -- make folks aware of cumulative effects of motor oil, anti-freeze, etc. (herbicides, insecticides, fertilizers) -- Have ongoing multi-aspect public service campaign dealing with river-related pollution (oil, fertilizer, etc)
- 7% Post signs with BMPs for certain activities at rivers, streams, etc
- 7% Spin the positive – water quality on the Ark River has improved greatly in the last 30 years -- Somehow show people the BIG picture to increase awareness
- 7% Conduct annual one-day progress symposium: Hold a symposium II, III, etc.
- 7% Develop education program to focus students on studying own watershed and doing local based projects. "Water Fair" – student work funnels to general public – what is "Healthy River"
- 3% The first step must be quantification by location of pollution levels. This probably means a coordination of efforts among several entities in a number of localities along the river corridor. From this group, a public relations spokesperson to the media.
- 3% Educate public and homeowners on how to use pesticides etc. Work with county extension office to educate homeowners on sustainable maintenance of home and lawns

- 3% Identify and communicate pollutant levels acceptable to the community -- Provide as much information as possible to public about what standards mean
- 3% Establish education program at the River's edge where people can learn the history of the river and its importance to our community
- 3% Use "Stream Teams" to help educate targeted public; train a volunteer workforce; and implement approved BMP's
- 3% "Riverstar" program or Develop slogan and pitch points for program -- i.e.: Good Neighbors Care About Clean Water
- 3% Intensive educational sweep so that all residents of the watershed area claim the river and see its significance and the environmental threat to it
- 3% Conduct "education" opportunities simultaneously with early action steps -- don't delay process by doing one before the other (combine and overlap whenever possible)

Category: Best Management Practices (BMP's)

40 Responses

- 17.5% **Begin a pilot program for storm-water inlet filters -- Catch basins for parking lots -- Impound runoff which is now discharged from storm-water sewers and permit some deposition / treatment before it enters open waterways -- Better means to clean storm water before it goes to the river -- Prevent runoff events (or treat all storm-water)**
- 15% **Create larger buffer zone along creeks and river channel to prevent runoff -- Mandate riparian borders to waterways to prevent erosion -- Install buffer strips everywhere -- Create edge / buffer zones in designated areas**
- 10% **Incorporate wetlands & riparian areas into existing developed areas**
- 7.5% No building in areas prone to flooding
- 7.5% Develop industry / technology mentor projects to exchange ideas and development of creative solutions to minimize runoff impact and reduce waste in general -- Educate and promote best management practices to developers
- 7.5% Develop a land / habitat exchange brokerage to maintain critical wetlands and filter areas in the flood plains in exchange for less environmentally sensitive areas
- 7.5% More use of natural means to filter runoff waters -- More green belt areas on river or wetlands -- No mow strips around drainage and retention ponds
- 5% Replicate the "Cheney Reservoir Project" to the Little Ark River basin and to the next largest tributary upstream on Big Ark River
- 2.5% Homeowners education programs concerning fertilizer and pesticide applications -- Work with outlets for lawn chemicals to hold training seminars for their customers on how to best maintain a non-polluting lawn -- Work with garden stores reassure label recommendations on fertilizers and pesticides
- 2.5% Tie a tax % to the downtown area for greenways, drainage improvements and BMPs
- 2.5% Provide discounted water rates for homeowners that establish "native" beneficial landscapes, turf alternatives, etc., that minimize use of pesticides and herbicides
- 2.5% Have curb recycling pick up and all pay extra charge if not recycling by end of year
- 2.5% Promote native landscapes for everywhere
- 2.5% Preserve / protect mature "good" riparian areas -- note it takes 15 to 20 years to grow a tree which provides riparian area water quality protection; A bulldozer can wipe out a mature area in a matter of hours
- 2.5% Increase in-stream habitats
- 2.5% For city runoff -- find ways that the water can be kept from the river (holding ponds near large paved areas)
- 2.5% Establish examination of best management actions for all sectors of population as an educational program at all public education levels in Sedgwick County. Students from agricultural homes would study best management farming practices that impact water quality

Category: Enforcement & Compliance

15 Responses

- 67% **Require improved storm-water design for all new construction**
- 20% Re-inspect each permitted outfall for possible exceedances (SSOs) or combined sewer overflows. Dry weather overflows, etc
- 13% Fees for offenders

Category: Government

38 Responses

- 21% Establish zoning regulations to limit development, add setbacks, and create more green space along river and tributaries
- 13% Require all new plats or housing areas to have greenway drainage areas
- 13% No more channelization of rivers and their tributaries. Free range waterways
- 11% City council commitment for clean water quality -- County council commitment for clean water quality-- Statement by Governor supporting water quality standards consistent with Clean Water Act
- 8% Public needs to better connect to river – “adopt river”, other campaigns--Ownership in the river, e.g., “Adopt a Stream Segment” by businesses, government, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc
- 8% Work on finding renewable energy sources that are clean and will reduce air pollution which in turn causes water pollution
- 5% Home septic systems
- 5% Coordinate efforts across government borders
- 3% Monitoring businesses for discharge
- 3% Coordinate water quality standards between Colorado and Kansas, especially on salt-load standards -- Continue political and legal efforts to increase river flow from Colorado
- 3% Replace / repair sanitary sewer collection systems
- 3% Provide increased number of city / county employees who serve to investigate corporate waste disposal and hold companies responsible. Provide awards for achievers
- 3% Increase staff and interagency cooperation to minimize repetition of work efforts
- 3% Better leadership from city and county – something POSITIVE
- 3% Monitor tributary quality to locate potential sources

Category: New Regulations

17 Responses

- 59% City / county watershed area – ban or containment of resident / company use of pesticides, herbicides, fertilizer for beautification in companion with campaign to edify more natural looking landscape values
- 23% Fast food containers tax
- 18% Regulations for atrazine. We know most of this comes from corn and grain sorghum. We also know what the water quality protection measures that work

Category: Planning & Development

34 Responses

- 24% Establish zoning regulations to prevent building in zones near rivers and creeks -- Reduce development in flood plains -- New development should be limited in watersheds, like Cowskin Creek
- 21% Increase green space in city along river and tributaries
- 18% Establish long-range vision and create plan for use & development of river – establish goals for water quality--Better long-term determination of land use
- 12% Look at more innovative subdivision development
- 12% Tie planning and zoning decisions to watershed management rather than plat by plat
- 6% Acquire unimproved land bordering all rivers and creeks in Sedgwick County and in the city
- 6% Establish design principle for new developments based on no increase in pollutant load discharged after developed condition
- 3% Develop a water quality goal for the river

Category: Rural

25 Responses

- 40% Provide and promote BMPs to encourage better agricultural practices then cost-share programs-- Provide counsel and incentive to farmers and ranchers to reduce pesticide/fertilizer use -- Apply fertilizer and herbicides for optimum yield – not maximum yield
- 20% Plan for & create setbacks for agricultural developing areas for wetlands / riparian areas
- 12% Urban & small acres – soil testing, fertility management, “Pet” (small and large) waste management, geese control, no more ponds/lakes, well-head protection, better waste management – lagoons, Rangeland management regulations – not just BMPs – keep livestock out of river, increase use of filter strips
- 8% Encourage new tillage crops to reduce soil erosion
- 8% Farm / school partnerships--Monitoring workshops for farmers / school kids
- 8% Bring landowners (farmers) to the table without crying guilty
- 4% Responsibility for large and small animal waste management

Category: Urban

24 Responses

- 59% Urban area – increase grassy areas, decrease impermeable surfaces to slow storm water runoff

- 25% Monitor parking lot drainage -- Require treatment of parking lot runoff--Green belts around parking lots (shopping areas)
- 8% Urban areas should take their share of blame because of litter, excessive use of fertilizer, pesticides, and herbicides
- 4% Cleanup trash from tributaries / canals in the City of Wichita
- 4% More detailed monitoring of sites in and around Wichita

Category: Visioneering

32 Responses

- 16% Establish county-wide visioning exercise for what the river could / should be in 2020--Develop plan of action based on a consensus vision of river water quality -- Develop a master plan for Arkansas River restoration / protection
- 16% Develop vision for the River -- what do "we" want it to look like?-- DEFINE THE PROBLEM -- Make a determination of how clean we want the Arkansas River to be -- i.e., establish specific measurable cleanup goals -- Need to better define what the real problems are
- 13% Give people / businesses a feeling of ownership in the river as a resource so they will want to be part of the solution
- 9% Promote and foster community involvement and actions (e.g. -- in neighborhoods to reduce pollution in storm-water runoff)-- Create widespread community involvement in addressing the problem, identifying solutions and strategies
- 9% Build cooperative partnerships with small cities near the river
- 6% Create stakeholder information / advisory / planning groups-- Make contact with stakeholders -- get commitments like 33/50, including all stakeholders -- Identify stakeholders, develop rivers vision and ask for improvement and commitments -- set targets and goals -- Establish community expectations and goals for the uses of the Arkansas River
- 6% What is important? What outcome? Public health, fish abundance / diversity, recreation -- what will make others think the Ark River is a good place to spend time?
- 6% Bring about a cultural change in attitude toward the river
- 3% Need small step success stories -- Determine attainable goals
- 3% Adopt city of Tulsa as sister city on Ark River -- Match city for city in other 4 states to work together along river, i.e., Hutchinson with Pueblo, CO, Wichita with Tulsa OK.
- 3% Establish and empower a group to address pollution problems in the forms of monitoring for locating and identifying sources; implementing actions to address problems (such as: storm traps, grass filters, education, programs, etc); and overseeing the comp
- 3% Coordination between rural and urban groups
- 3% Need to determine if there is the "public will" to address issue
- 3% Visualize to public of what "could be"

Web Page: The webpage has been moved to the Environmental Services page:

<http://wichita.gov/CityOffices/Environmental/> A page on the Arkansas River Advisory Committee has also been added to the Arkansas River Water Quality Campaign page.

<http://wichita.gov/CityOffices/Environmental/River/Committee/>

Next River Trash Round Up: May 6, 2006. The Sierra Club plans to do advertising before the event and combine the clean up with a float trip. They will also do a literature drop to the houses and businesses along the river one week prior to the even. Sierra Club will work with the City to get the to neighborhood associations, high school groups, boy scouts, and others.

Adjourn